CONFIDENTIAL

Mr. Bruce

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OFFICE

5378

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: May 9, 1952

SUBJECT: Call of Ambassador Jacques Leger on the Under Secretary

PARTICIPANTS: The Under Secretary
Ambassador Leger, of Haiti

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COPIES TO: UNP
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AR
MID
Embassy Port-au-Prince (informally)

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The Ambassador of Haiti, Jacques Leger, called upon me this morning on a visit of courtesy. He said that as the then Ambassador of Haiti to Argentina he had been acquainted with my brother, James Bruce, when he was United States Ambassador to Argentina and spoke in complimentary terms of his mission.

The Ambassador informed me that his Government had just received notification from the Government of France through the French Ambassador in Haiti that France would consider it an unfriendly act for Haiti to support the proposal that an extraordinary session of the General Assembly of the United Nations be convened to consider the Tunisian case. He said that he had been instructed to ascertain the views of the United States Government. He said that his Government would want to follow the leadership of the United States in this matter.

I informed the Ambassador that the position of the United States, as stated by the United States representative on the Security Council when he abstained from voting on the motion to put the Tunisian matter on the agenda, is that the parties to this dispute, which does not yet appear to constitute a threat to international peace, should have a reasonable opportunity to reach by negotiation a settlement satisfactory to both. I emphasized, however, that the United States had reserved its freedom of action for the future in case an agreement should not be reached after a reasonable period.

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I stated it as our opinion that in cases of differences between groups within a state, or as in this case between a state and its protectorate, it is preferable for the parties involved to work out an agreement which they will voluntarily accept rather than to have an agreement imposed upon them by outside parties who have little knowledge of the true situation. I observed that this attitude is characteristic of the western democracies. I put it to the Ambassador that if a revolutionary party in Haiti should create an issue with the Haitian Government, the latter would prefer to have a reasonable opportunity to negotiate a national solution satisfactory to all parties before an international organization should consider the situation.

I acknowledged that there may come a point, not easily determined, at which states must take cognizance of the fact that a situation has become a threat to the peace. I pointed out that if the Tunisian situation should later require, the matter could be considered by the Security Council or by the regular session of the United Nations General Assembly which will meet later this year.

The Ambassador expressed appreciation for my statement of the United States position and agreement with it. He observed that it is one of the principles of the Organization of American States to permit and encourage parties to a dispute to reach a settlement by direct negotiation if possible.

The Ambassador commented upon the responsibilities of the United States in its present position of leadership. I emphasized that what is important is not the leadership of one state so much as the cooperation of all nations including Haiti for the maintenance of international peace.

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